

# Public School Choice



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





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**PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA**

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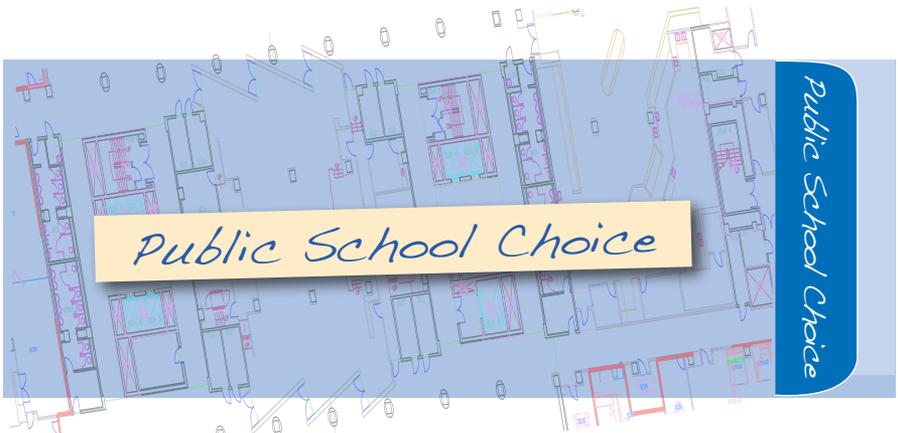
Every child in America deserves a world-class education.

Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

We must do better. Together, we must achieve a new goal, that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves—this must be a national priority. We must ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a distinct "O".





## *Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*

To help achieve President Obama's stated goal of making increased expectations for our students and our schools a national priority, the administration has designed a blueprint for a reenvisioned federal role in education through the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. The new *ESEA* will

***Support effective public school choice*** in addition to broad-based comprehensive state and local reforms and the expansion of evidence-based practices and innovations. The administration's *ESEA* reauthorization proposal will encourage educational entrepreneurship by expanding competitive grants aimed at increasing the supply of high-quality public educational options available to students.

The reauthorization will focus on support for the following three models of public school choice.

***Supporting Effective Charter Schools.*** The reauthorization proposal will provide competitive grants to states, charter school authorizers, charter management organizations, districts, and nonprofit organizations to start or expand high-performing public charter schools and other high-performing autonomous public schools, with a priority for applicants proposing to start or expand high-performing public charter schools. Autonomous schools are public schools that, as much or even more than charter schools,

have ongoing autonomy over key operational elements, including the staffing, budget, schedule, and education program. Both charter schools and other autonomous schools funded under this program must be subject to the same accountability systems as traditional public schools, as well as increased accountability for improving student academic achievement.

To ensure that funds are used to start or expand high-performing schools that improve outcomes for all subgroups of students, applicants will be evaluated based on: their record of past success in funding, supporting, authorizing, managing, or operating (as relevant) high-performing public charter schools or other high-performing autonomous public schools; their record of cutting off funding to or closing low-performing charter schools or other low-performing autonomous schools; and their commitment to improving the quality of their schools in the future. Grantees will be required to develop plans to appropriately serve all students in charter or other autonomous schools, including English Learners and students with disabilities, and to provide information to ensure students and families are aware of and able to apply to these schools. The secretary may reserve a portion of funds to improve charter schools' access to facilities or to facilities financing.

To build greater capacity to support and hold schools accountable under this program, grantees at all levels will be allowed to set aside funds to improve their capacity to oversee and support schools funded under this program. Additionally, charter management organizations that commit to work with districts to support them in implementing effective strategies in district schools may be eligible for larger grants.

***Promoting Public School Choice.*** The proposed reauthorization will continue to provide competitive grants to districts, consortia of districts, and states in partnership with districts to expand high-quality public school educational options for students, especially for students in low-performing schools, and to ensure that students and families are aware of these options. Grantees will use funds to implement such options by creating or expanding inter- and

intradistrict choice programs, theme-based schools, high-quality online learning programs, or academic pathways. Grantees must also carry out activities to provide students, families, and the community with information about how to identify, evaluate, and access high-quality educational options. Priority will be given to interdistrict choice programs and programs that provide comprehensive choices to every student in a district. Priority will also be given to programs that increase diversity in the schools served by the program.

***Continuing the Magnet Schools Assistance Program.*** The proposed reauthorization will continue to provide competitive grants to districts to support magnet schools under a desegregation plan ordered by a federal court, state court, or other authorized state agency or official, or approved by the secretary. The reauthorized program will expand and improve options for students and increase diversity by placing a greater emphasis on funding whole-school magnet school programs or models that have a record of success in raising student academic achievement and reducing minority group isolation.

**To help students thrive in the classroom so they can thrive in college and a career, the administration will provide students and families with increased high-quality public school educational options and empower them with improved information about the options available to them. And across programs, it will focus less on compliance and more on enabling effective local strategies to flourish.**

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